DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 190 316 RC 012 165

AUTHOR Mason, Kristine; And Others
TITLE Rural School Girls: A Case Study in an English Village.
PUB DATE Aug 80
NOTE 27p.; Paper presented at the World Congress for Rural Sociology (5th, Mexico City, August, 1980).

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Academic Achievement; Case Studies; *Education Work Relationship; Elementary Secondary Education; Employment Opportunities; Expectation; *Females; Interviews; *Occupational Aspiration; *Rural Education; Rural to Urban Migration; *Rural Youth; *Sex Differences; Student Attitudes
IDENTIFIERS *England

ABSTRACT

A review of literature and research on rural education in England indicated declining enrollments coupled with severe government restraints on public expenditures are impacting upon the maintenance and orientation of rural English schools. Investigation of research on the education of girls with specific reference to academic achievement and work expectation indicated there is a pressing need for research in rural areas generally and in the education of rural girls specifically. This case study of primary (N=121) and secondary (N=190) school students in a small rural village in England challenged the conventional belief that rural girls want to remain in their village of origin and assume the traditionally ascribed roles of wife and mother. Field observations and personal interviews indicated boys preferred to stay in the area of their origin, while many girls were both prepared and willing to migrate: boys, in general, regarded schooling as rather irrelevant to their lives: girls saw it as "the way out" and were encouraged to think in this manner by their mothers. Boys seemed to rationalize the girls' higher levels of motivation and performance at school by regarding school work as feminine and by recognizing that in order to find employment, girls must achieve at higher academic levels. Given the increasing mechanization of farm operations and a drastic reduction of rural housing coupled with the scarcity of employment opportunities, it is recommended that rural education be given research priority. (JC)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED190316

'Rural School Girls: A Case Study in an English Village'

Paper prepared for the 5th World Congress for Rural Sociology, Mexico, August 1980, by

Kristine Mason
Robert Meyenn
Margaret Small

Department of Educational Enquiry
The University of Aston in Birmingham
Birmingham B4 7ET
England.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Margaret Small
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Acknowledgements

The authors gratefully acknowledge the assistance of the villagers of Headleigh and Sylvia Holland for her efforts in typing this paper.

RC 012165

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Kristine Mason
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Robert Meyenn
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

ABSTRACT

Title: Rural School Girls : A Case Study in an English Village

Authors: Kristine Mason (Britain), Robert Meyenn (Australia) and Margaret Small (Britain).

Contact: At Department of Educational Enquiry, The University of Aston, Gosta Green, Birmingham, B4 7ET, England.

Whilst there has been a growing interest recently in the schooling of girls in England, it has been one which has been concentrated almost exclusively within the urban school context. No sociological account has been published which has directed itself solely to the situation of school girls in rural schools. It is to this area that the paper is addressed. The paper covers three main areas. In the first part we review the literature and research in the area of rural education in England which is of particular concern at present because of the feature of falling school rolls, coupled with the severe government restraints on public expenditure. This is followed by an overview of selected areas of the research and literature on the education of girls with particular reference to their performance at school and expectations of work. In the third part of the paper we describe the location of the case study research and then go on to report on the perceptions of school and work expectations of primary and secondary school rural youth. Our research would seem to challenge the conventional notion that rural girls aspire to the traditionally ascribed roles of wife and mother.

INTRODUCTION

This paper attempts to provide an analysis of the school experience of girls in a rural area of England. The first section examines the current issues in the provision of education in the rural areas of England and looks at the attempts being made by the various local authorities responsible to meet the challenges of falling school rolls and increasing demands for a reduction in public expenditure. The education of girls in general is discussed and the absence from the literature of work on the education of rural girls is noted.

In the following section there is a brief outline of the research methodology employed and a description of the characteristics of the rural community where field work was carried out. The data reported for the purposes of this paper concentrates on the school performance and job aspirations of both boys and girls in their final year at primary school (aged 11-12 years) and their final year of compulsory secondary education (aged 16 years). Patriarchal attitudes and social relationships are considered to help account for and understand the data. Some tentative conclusions are made and preliminary implications drawn out.

PROVISION OF EDUCATION IN RURAL AREAS

The problems of providing education in rural areas has been a continuing major concern of most third world countries. Concern with these issues has now assumed major proportions in much of the developed world. The Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development has recently completed a project, among its 24 member nations, on the provision of education in sparsely populated areas (O.E.C.D. 1978) and is currently involved in a project concerning education and local development (Comber and Meyenn, 1980) in rural areas which seeks to explain links between schools and local economic development. Here in England the Government departments of the Environment and Education and Science are jointly financing a project into the 'Social Effects of Rural Primary School Reorganization (Aston University, 1979, 1980).

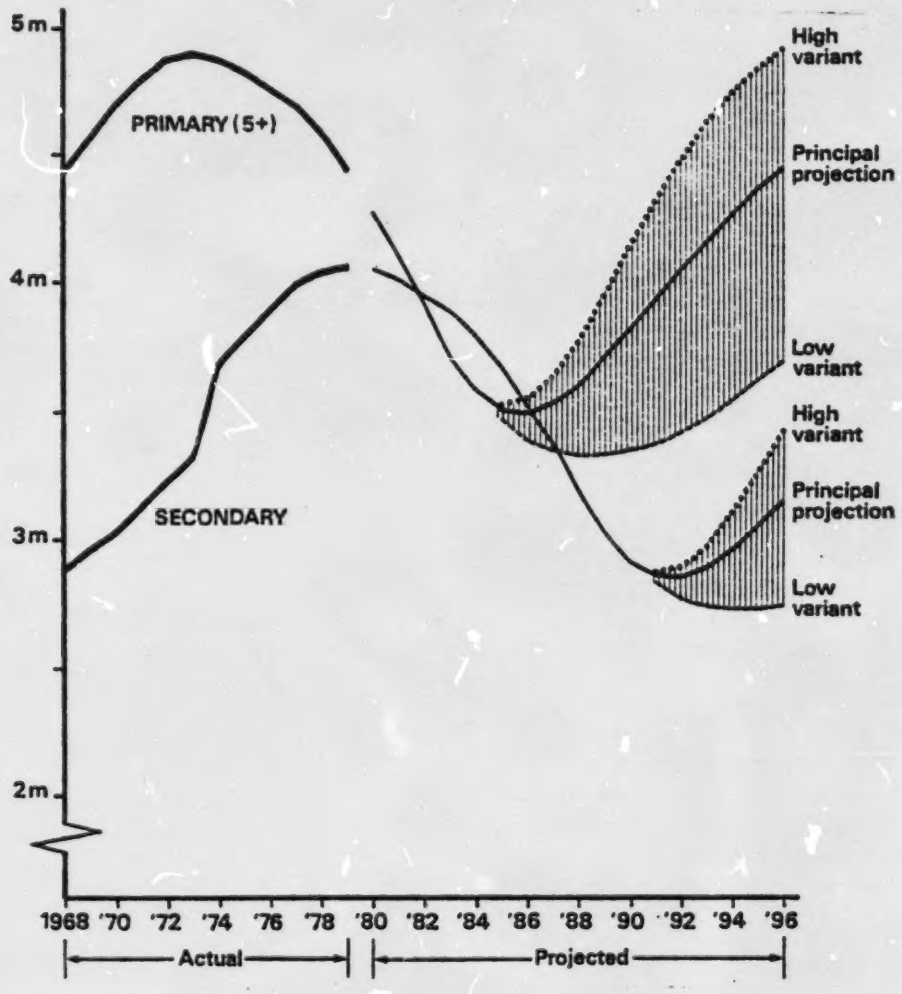
The reasons for this current surge of interest and concern with rural education are many and complex. Among the main reasons is the fall in the birth rate during the 1970's (although the past 18 months has seen a gradual rise) which has meant fewer children at schools and so many more 'small' rural schools which may be considered educationally or economically unviable. A recent national survey (Aston University, 1980) of the 39 non-metropolitan local education authorities in England revealed that they expected their primary school pupil numbers in the

-continued-

in the mid 1980's to be 79% of those that they were in the mid 1970's. The following figure (Figure 1) shows the drop in school pupil numbers for England and Wales as a whole.

FIGURE 1.

PRIMARY AND SECONDARY PUPIL NUMBERS.



Source D.E.S. 1979.

This then makes many more small rural schools 'vulnerable' or under threat and creates difficulties in the smaller secondary

- continued-

school in their attempts to provide a breadth of curriculum experience.

The closure of small rural schools in connection with programmes of consolidation and centralization is not a new phenomenon. Historically the classic response to declining rolls in the rural context has been the amalgamation of schools. The Plowden report (1967), which recommended a minimum school size of 3 teachers and sixty pupils, immediately placed thousands of rural primary schools at risk. The ideology of the larger unit which pervaded much educational thinking and rhetoric of this era resulted in the closure of at least 1,000 rural schools in England between 1955 and 1975. (See Sher, 1977, for a full discussion of similar trends in the U.S.A.).

The second half of the 1970's has seen a considerable decrease in the number of rural school closures. This can be attributed in no small measure to the increasingly well organized and articulate community action groups who form to defend their school. These local groups now have the support of national and regional organizations (e.g. the National Association for the Support of Small Schools (N.A.S.S.S.)

This "vocal local defence" by rural communities must be seen in the context of a more general concern with rural issues and rural communities. There is increasing national and international concern with issues such as rural development, the provision of employment in rural areas.

However, while economic as well as educational considerations have always been factors in the planning of educational provision for a particular area, the present economic climate and the current government policy of public expenditure cuts have made economic considerations an increasingly important factor. Others argue that the closure of schools in rural areas may not lead to the financial savings anticipated, particularly with the increased costs of transport as well as other social considerations.

Much of the discussion about rural issues generally and rural education particularly is based on opinion and assumption and has very little basis in solid research evidence. Research into the issues of the provision of education in rural areas with some notable exceptions e.g. Nash (1976) in England and Sher (1977) U.S.A, is very sparse. If one is to look for research into the educational provision for girls in rural areas then the task is even more difficult. (The work of Byrne (1978) in the U.K. and Dunne (1980) in the U.S.A. are exceptions). With most researchers and writers in the area of rural education, gender does not seem to be a relevant category. In the next section we look briefly at selected sections of the literature on the education of girls.

THE EDUCATION OF GIRLS

The relatively recent and rapid growth of the feminist movement, together with societal changes, economic demands and not least the 1965 U.N. programme to improve the status of women in all fields has, in Britain, led not only to judicial changes in the form of the 1970 Equal Pay Act and the 1975 Sex Discrimination Act, but also to a rapid increase in empirical and theoretical research into:

- the nature of inherent gender differences in terms of basic unalterable aptitudes and dispositions
- the ways in which availability of life's experiences are determined by gender

The development of these research areas has now progressed to the stage where there is a plethora of published research reports, critical reviews and collections of papers (Meighan & Doherty (1975), Lloyd and Archer (1976), Byrne (1978) Chetwynd & Herbert (1978), Herbert, Boden & Fuller (1979) - to name just a few which are specifically related to Education), and also increasing numbers of publications aimed at a non-specialist market with a view to female consciousness raising and providing intervention strategies for the school (Rowbotham (1973), Oakley (1974), Nicholson (1975), Sharpe (1976), Henning & Jardie (1978)). Here we will briefly deal with a limited selection of topics which have a direct relevance to the present study.

i) Performance In surveying the education literature for research findings on girls at school it quickly becomes apparent that the vast majority of attitudinal work has been undertaken either with groups of schoolboys or with groups labelled "school children".

Research reporting on girls' attitudes to school ranges from statements which seem plausible but apparently lack the authority of an identifiable research origin':

e.g. "A lot of girls like school for the friends they meet there.." Sharpe (1976; 155)

to survey data quoted by Byrne (1978; 116)

e.g. Fifth form survey (girls)

Q. Do you think boys and girls should have different secondary education from boys? Yes 13% No 87%

Q. Do you think girls should have different careers from boys? Yes 32% No 68%

which does not specify size or origin of sample.

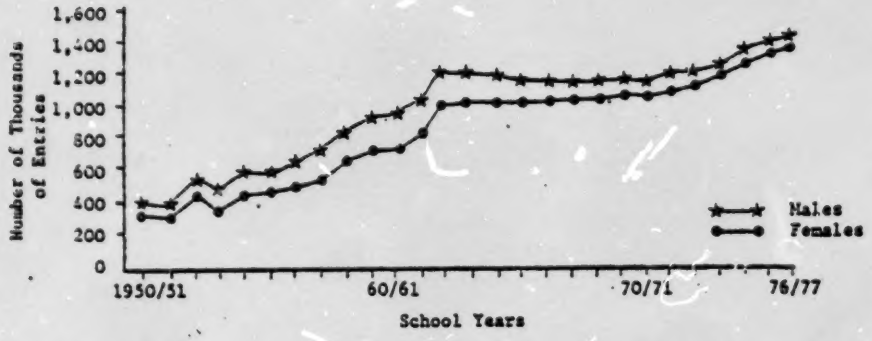
Possibly the most revealing and reliable data is to be found in the statistics describing examination entries and examination

-continued-

pass rates for boys and girls. These national statistics provide an indication of the extent to which boys and girls are prepared, or allowed, to submit themselves to a nationally based assessment of their abilities (Figures 2 and 3)

FIGURE 2 *

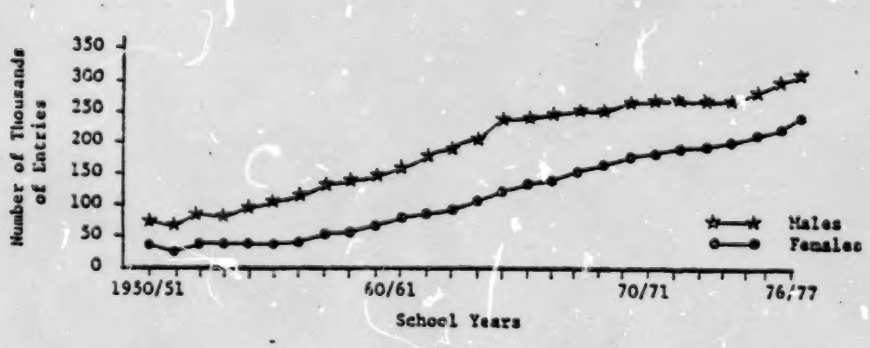
MALE AND FEMALE ENTRY STATISTICS FOR GCE 'O' LEVEL EXAMINATIONS (1951 - 1977)



(Source of Data: DES Statistics of Education. Volumes Between 1951 and 1979.)

FIGURE 3 *

MALE AND FEMALE ENTRY STATISTICS FOR GCE 'A' LEVEL EXAMINATIONS (1951 - 1977)



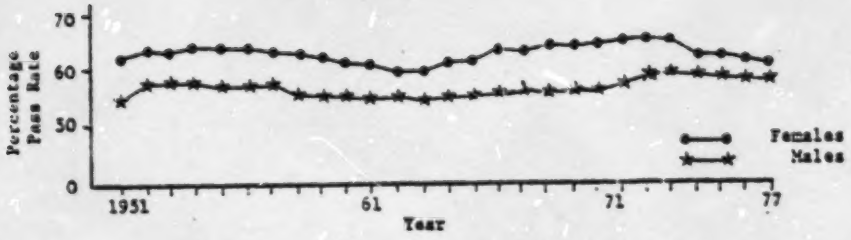
(Source of Data: DES Statistics of Education. Volumes Between 1951 and 1979.)

* From Murphy (1980)

It can be seen that for both 'O' and 'A' level examinations, a larger number of boys than of girls are entered for these examinations. However, data displayed in Figures 4 and 5 show that percentage pass rates are better for girls than boys.

FIGURE 4*

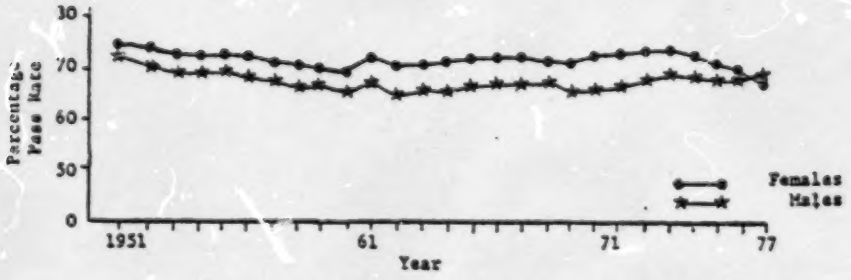
MALE AND FEMALE PASS RATES IN
GCE 'O' LEVEL EXAMINATIONS (1951 - 1977)



(Source of Data: DES Statistics of Education. Volumes Between 1951 and 1977.)

FIGURE 5*

MALE AND FEMALE PASS RATES IN
GCE 'A' LEVEL EXAMINATIONS (1951-1977)



(Source of Data: DES Statistics of Education. Volumes Between 1951 and 1977.)

Further official data (Tables 1 and 2) provide similar indirect evidence of the attitudes of boys and girls to different subjects. The differential preferences of boys and girls can be clearly seen; also it is apparent that for many subjects these preferences have lessened during the time span of the data presented.

* From Murphy (1980)

-continued-

TABLE 1*

NUMBER OF MALE AND FEMALE CANDIDATES ENTERED FOR THIRTEEN 'O' LEVEL EXAMINATIONS IN SUMMER 1951 AND SUMMER 1977.

	SUMMER 1951		SUMMER 1977	
	MALE ENTRIES (in 000s)	FEMALE ENTRIES (in 000s)	MALE ENTRIES (in 000s)	FEMALE ENTRIES (in 000s)
ENGLISH LANGUAGE	57.60	51.29	221.86	250.81
MATHEMATICS	51.16	29.46	167.07	122.60
ENGLISH LITERATURE	43.39	43.31	108.75	145.23
BIOLOGY	6.94	22.08	84.60	136.59
GEOGRAPHY	34.89	31.56	109.78	87.19
FRENCH	41.83	36.59	66.97	87.52
HISTORY	33.89	32.36	70.60	72.76
ART	16.36	20.23	50.81	62.31
PHYSICS	18.82	2.73	114.27	31.54
CHEMISTRY	16.01	4.67	79.86	40.34
RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE	9.32	13.17	24.70	40.39
COOKERY	0.39	14.37	1.55	51.40
TECHNICAL DRAWING	3.32	0.15	52.64	1.32
TOTAL ENTRY (Including entries for other subjects not listed.)	398.50	340.20	1443.60	1408.40

(Source of Data: DES Statistics of Education. Volumes Between 1951 and 1977.)

TABLE 2*

NUMBER OF MALE AND FEMALE CANDIDATES ENTERED FOR THIRTEEN 'A" LEVEL EXAMINATIONS IN SUMMER 1951 AND SUMMER 1977.

	SUMMER 1951		SUMMER 1977	
	MALE ENTRIES (in 000s)	FEMALE ENTRIES (in 000s)	MALE ENTRIES (in 000s)	FEMALE ENTRIES (in 000s)
ENGLISH	6.14	6.78	22.56	44.74
PURE & APPLIED MATHS	9.58	1.31	37.01	10.76
PHYSICS	11.94	1.66	37.07	8.02
CHEMISTRY	10.75	1.98	27.48	11.47
HISTORY	6.14	4.09	19.25	19.92
ECONOMICS	1.06	0.12	28.57	10.60
GEOGRAPHY	4.04	2.40	23.26	12.67
BIOLOGY	2.68	1.44	18.40	18.84
GENERAL STUDIES	-	-	15.95	11.39
ART	0.71	0.95	10.92	15.17
FRENCH	5.12	4.64	8.09	17.09
BRITISH CONSTITUTION	-	-	11.89	6.51
SOCIOLOGY	-	-	5.04	10.76
TOTAL ENTRY (Including entries for other subjects, not listed.)	71.50	32.30	316.40	238.10

(Source of Data: DES Statistics of Education. Volumes Between 1951 and 1977.)

* From Murphy (1980)

Murphy (1979) concludes from this and other similar data that "it would seem to be fairly clear that sex-role stereotyping has a considerable influence within education, and in turn affects the performance of candidates of both sexes in examination. The extent to which these stereotypes are built on actual differences in ability and the extent to which they are created by society remains unsolved, although it seems likely that the socio-cultural influence plays the bigger part".

This movement towards the acceptance of socio-cultural influences as of at least equal importance to biological determinants is covered briefly but concisely by Archer (1978).

A fruitful research area covering a possible explanation for some of these seemingly socially determined different patterns of achievement between boys and girls is based on initial work by Horner (1968). She proposed that the possibility of high academic achievement represents a conflict situation for girls vis a vis the accompanying ascendancy over their male peers. This explanation would seem to be endorsed for British schoolgirls by the work of Maccoby & Jacklin (1974), Davies & Meighen (1975). Lobban (1978) provides a brief and useful summary of this work.

ii) Expectations of Work For the 80% of girls who do not enter further or higher education the work issue is basic. Byrne (1978) notes that the "less able" they are, the more likely girls are to limit their horizons to local opportunities. They are less adventurous and less confident. Leaving school at 16+ they are too young to leave home, already have local ties and boyfriends, accept the domestic demands of their own family. They seek the security and immediacy of local employment knowing that their employment will cover a short term and after that there is the myth that women do not work after marriage. Other issues dealt with in the literature concern - assumptions on work which is or is not appropriate for women; differential facilities for further and higher education; unpaid careers of education of women for government. Byrne (1978), Mackie & Pattulo (1977).

iii) Education of Rural Girls The British literature in this area is, as has already been noted, very sparse. The only published contributions appear to be those of Byrne. She suggests there are 5 major indices in equality :

i) gender
ii) lower social class
iii) lower range of intelligence
iv) residence in certain regions with a history of under-achievement
v) residence in rural areas

Clearly all girls in a rural area will be affected by at least 2 of these and maybe in some cases all 5.

Byrne's (1975) study of rural schools found 'hidden splits' in the curricula. In rural science girls were concentrating on pets and horticulture, boys on agricultural science. Girls' career aspirations for all except the top 15%, were depressed to work at or below secretarial and bank clerk level. Economics was restricted to boys in some schools. Typing to girls in all schools.

-continued-

It is obvious from the foregoing sections that there is a pressing need for research in rural areas generally and the education of girls in rural areas in particular.

THE FIELDWORK

i) Methodology Various structural features of the region under study were collected by members of the research team prior to one member of the team living for three months in a village to carry out participant observation.

As we have indicated, the literature on the education of girls in rural areas is negligible, but from the literature which does exist it appears that 'A girl's primary career is still considered to lie in the home and little attempt is made to broaden her career choice' Chamberlain (1975; 50). There is no analysis however of how rural girls actually achieve in school nor of their perceptions of their own position in relation to education and employment and whether they are willing to accept traditional definitions of their situation.

Although we delineated certain target areas for participant observation such as the schools and the community centre, we entered the field trying to maintain an open mind about what we would find and the issues that we would address. Writers in qualitative methodology have been consistent in arguing that hypotheses should be generated as the data is being collected. In his now classic study Whyte (1958) warns against firm original hypotheses, saying that ideas grow up in part out of out of our immersion in the data and out of the whole process of living in the field. More recently, Corrigan (1979) has described how his original preconceptions about the schooling of working class boys in the North East of England altered dramatically once he began to ask questions in the field. Thus, after some weeks of fieldwork and of working through our data rather than simply selecting preferred themes, Anderson (1980; 11), we began to see the emergence of a clear pattern, and one which was in many ways different from the 'taken for granted notion' about country girls 'knowing their place'.

ii) The Fieldwork Location The research was conducted in the village of Headleigh* which is situated in the southern district of a West Midland's county which has been termed 'one of the most rural of all counties'. Hale (1971; 2).

At one time the village was served by a railway and it was the location of a thriving market and a large shop which was renowned in the county for the quality and variety of its goods and services. Now, however, the main features of the village are an historic Church with a fibre glass steeple, a post office, general store, butcher, garage, two pubs, two schools and a newly constructed community centre. Tourists in the county would probably not stop to look at the village, the development of new modern houses which flank one side of the village (and which are referred to by local farmers as 'pigeon houses') and the village's sizeable council housing estate providing a rather unattractive picture.

* All places and personal names used in this paper are pseudonyms

-continued-

The valley in which the village is situated is most beautiful and when admiring it, it is difficult to avoid falling into the ideological view of pastoral England so well described by Newby (1977). A letter from the District Planning Office to a resident in March, 1980, highlights what the ideology serves to mark

> 'The problem of rural depopulation and deprivation, as you are no doubt aware, has been a cause of concern for a number of years and it is thought that this area ... suffers more than any other within .... district .... the present economic depression has further exaggerated rural hardship i.e. the fuel crisis, rising transport costs and cuts in public transport, migration to the town for housing and employment and the resultant closure of schools, shops and post offices in the villages has further deprived country folk' (sic).

iii) Social Composition According to 1977 census update returns, Headleigh has a population of 754, 379 of whom are female. The age structure is

TABLE 3

POPULATION : AGE : SEX

TOTAL POPULATION

	MALES	FEMALES	TOTAL
0-4	29	26	55
5-9	32	30	62
10-14	28	29	57
15-19	24	23	47
20-24	27	26	53
25-29	30	33	63
30-34	28	27	55
35-39	26	21	47
40-44	25	18	43
45-49	20	23	43
50-54	18	20	38
55-59	14	22	36
60-64	16	19	35
65-69	19	17	36
70-74	19	19	38
75+	20	26	46

The social mix is considerable with the 'locals' occupying a range of class positions from farmer to council house tenant and the 'incomers' who consist of both elderly people, referred to by locals as 'retired townies', and young couples living in the 'pigeon houses', as well as couples mainly in their thirties who came from the town in the mid-seventies aiming for varying degrees of self-sufficiency or to establish themselves in a craft. This latter group is referred to fairly indiscriminantly by locals as 'those hippies'.

-continued-

Perhaps because of these diverse groupings Headleigh unlike other villages in the valley does not fall neatly into the 'pub/church social divide'. Indeed it was evident that at such functions as the Community Centre Committee meeting members from all groupings were present.

iv) Employment According to official returns, those engaged in economic activity are :

TABLE 4

% EMPLOYMENT OF MEN AND WOMEN (1977 CENSUS DATA)

		MEN	WOMEN
AGE RANGE (YRS)	UP TO 24	27	12
	25-44	96	60
	45-59	100	49
	60-64	100	21
	65 & OVER	19	5
	OVERALL	59	30
	POPULATION	375	379

Thus it would seem that the proportion of men and women in officially recognised employment are 59% and 30% respectively. It is interesting to note that for men 96% of the 25-44 yr. old group and 100% of the 45-65 yr. old group are in employment.

Such official figures do not, however, present the true picture of employment, firstly because they do not take into account the work of the women such as 'farmer's wives', secondly, much of the work is part-time or seasonal, e.g. fruit picking., and thirdly as the village primary school headteacher put it 'nearly everybody moonlights, practically everybody has two jobs'.

For men the main forms of local employment are farming,(though there are very few who would be classified as farm labourers) and transport (and related work such as motor vehicle mechanics) Although of course there are those who work away from the immediate area.

For women the main forms of local paid employment are domestic work (for old people and in schools), the local plastics factory and seasonal fruit and vegetable picking.

Among villagers there is a clear emphasis on the work ethic, as the vicar, who has been in the village over twenty years said, 'we have very hard working people here, and also over here people who are a bit workshy are looked down on. If you're workshy you won't have the respect of the community'. Certainly within the village people seemed to have a very good idea of each other's activities, as one 'incomer' ruefully said 'Here, if you

-continued-

sneeze, everybody knows about it, and what kind of handkerchief you use'.

v) Schools There are two schools in the village, a primary school for 5 - 11 year old boys and girls, and a county comprehensive school for boys and girls aged twelve to sixteen. At the age of sixteen pupils may either leave school or continue their education at either the technical college or the sixth form college in the market town, twelve miles distant.

a) The Primary School

The main building of Headleigh primary school reflects the fact that it was established in the early 1870's, when primary education became compulsory. Behind this building are four classrooms and a swimming pool, the latter item indicating the energetic fund raising activities of the parent teacher association and the munificence of a local educational trust.

Attached to the primary school is the Community Centre in which many activities take place including a pre-school play group which is organised by mothers three mornings a week. As the school and the centre share a common entrance there is the feeling that the school itself is open to the community. In order to further foster this notion the headteacher combined a school open evening with an exhibition of local history - this evening attracted a wide spectrum of the community.

The school has a head-teacher (male) and four women teachers plus ancilliary and secretarial assistance. Each of the teachers is responsible for teaching most of the curriculum of her own class. The head-teacher has timetabled himself for a reduced amount of teaching so that he can administrate and be 'available'.

There are [illegible] pupils in the school, nine short of entitling the school to another teacher. Many of the pupils come from surrounding villages and have to be 'bussed' to school.

The pupils are not 'streamed' but rather they engage in self-assessment testing. At present the head-teacher feels some pressure from the secondary school concerning the standard that the primary pupils should be expected to attain before entering secondary school.

b) The Secondary School

The secondary school is mainly housed in what was once the village manor, a [illegible]acious building in pleasant grounds. It is one of the small[illegible] secondary schools in England, with a roll of 190 pupils. Because of its smallness it has been considered to be in imminent danger of closure for the past 20 years since 410 is the considered minimum number for a secondary school in the county.

-continued-

The pupils come from a catchment area of about 160 square miles which means that some of them have to meet the school bus at 7.40 a.m. in order to be at school by quarter to nine.

The academic staff consists of a head-teacher (male) and fourteen teachers (8 of whom are women). Each teacher is expected to teach at least two subject areas. Pupils may take papers in either the General Certificate of Education or the Certificate of Secondary Education examination.

In the course of the fieldwork it was evident how the functioning of a rural school is impaired by factors which would not impinge on an urban school. Heavy snows prevented children from getting to school and when the river overflowed its banks (a regular occurrence and referred to in the primary school log book of 1894) the school had to be closed.

The head-teacher of the primary school lives in the village and takes an active part in local affairs for as he said 'the community is meat to me'. The head of the secondary school lives the other side of the market town but he has a clear idea of how the school should relate to the community. As he said, when discussing how absenteeism among pupils relates to the farm calender 'the school must bend with the community and not fight it' and he went on to discuss the lambing in March, the sheep dipping and shearing in May, the haymaking in June, the potatoe harvest in September and the dressing of poultry in December.

vi) Primary School Pupils

The head-teacher stated that 'the girls are more intelligent than the boys' and he said that there were no girls receiving remedial attention. It is interesting to note that one of the boys receiving such attention came from an established farming family and is both knowledgeable and very capable on matters related to livestock. Perhaps the following dialogue between two ten year old boys gives a clue to how some young farmers feel about 'book work'. (Paul is the son of a wealthy farmer and expects that when he leaves school his parents will buy him his own farm). Asked what they do when not at school:

Chris: I read books and play football

Paul: You're daft reading books, they're boring

Chris: When you're reading a book, you're not reading a book, you're doing what they're doing.

Paul: A book's only a piece of wood with writing on it.

According to the head of the secondary school, boys on farms are 'verbally deprived' since there are few communal mealtimes and the word 'John' for example, yelled up the yard would have many meanings, depending on its context.

-continued-

In the view of the reception class teacher in the primary school: 'the little girls work more conscientiously and more neatly, and in general they tend to read more quickly... little girls tend to be with mothers who talk 'boys tend to go outside and deal with things'.

The teacher of the 8-9 year olds said 'the higher standards are achieved by the girls literally in test type things. I have a lot of backward boys, boys with problems. The girls are the achieving ones and the quantity of work they do is far greater. I've got one boy who asks to take work home and about six girls. It's very hard to generalise, but on the whole the girls seem to fit in much quicker and knuckle down'.

In discussion with the top class of the primary school, ten and eleven year olds, it became clear that both sexes held traditional views of male and female occupations.

At this age the girls' job aspirations, although sex-role biased, ranged from realism to fantasy, for example:

Interviewer: What do you want to do when you leave school?

Mary: millions of things. I want to be an ice-skater and a housewife, or just a housewife. I can't do anything else

Susan: I wouldn't mind being a show jumper or work in a shop like a chemists

Jane: I'd like to go to University I might go to America.
(the daughter of the manager of the plastics factory)

Joan: ride a horse, dance, be an ice-skater

Kate: be a dancer or work in a shop

The boys of the same age in answer to the same question also thought in terms of traditional male occupations, but were consistent in being 'realistic'. For example :

Pete: I'd like to inherit our farm because my grandad bought it

Jeff: I'd like to work on a farm and in the end have one I'll leave it to my brother.. if he wants me to stay I'll stay and if not, I'll go.

Jim: an engineer, mechanical. A greasy one, cars and engines have always been my hobby.

The boys held traditional notions about 'proper' jobs for girls:

Steve: Nursing

Dave: Secretaries or assistants

Stuart: Helping in shops and working in government things. If they can stand blood they can go in the police force and be a nurse, or for when they send out calls.

Jeff: They wouldn't want to be a mechanic, they'd be a secretary, they wouldn't want to get mucky.

vii) The Secondary School Pupils According to one of the School Governors the secondary school has a 'fantastic record' in the C.S.E. and G.C.E. 'O' level examinations and perusal of examination results among other schools would seem to confirm this opinion. The number of examination entries for the present Vth form are given in Table 5 :

TABLE 5

NUMBERS OF BOYS AND GIRLS ENTERED FOR G.C.E. 'O' LEVEL EXAMINATIONS, SUMMER 1980

	BOYS	GIRLS
NUMBER IN VTH FORM	17	17
NUMBER ENTERED FOR EXAMS	5	11
NUMBER OF EXAMS ENTERED	29	45

In the third and the fourth year the top two class positions are held by girls for mathematics and according to the Math's teacher '... the girls are more motivated ... it's usually the boys I've found more motivated in city schools. Yes I think there is a reversal here. I think that the good boys are good here but it seems to bring the girls out'.

It would appear then that the girls in the school are performing better than the boys and this is borne out by the remarks of one teacher that 'there are more boys than girls in the lower classes'.

The pupils themslves, both boys and girls, felt in general that the girls were, throughout their school career, more hard working than the boys. Both sexes related their higher degree of motivation and achievement to the fact that there were very few employment opportunities for women in the area, and that in order to undergo training and/or find employment elsewhere the girls would need to have an acceptable school record.

However aspects of the curriculum and certainly the behaviour of some of the boys conspired to hinder the girls' work efforts. The following transcript is typical of interviews with the fifth year girls:

Interviewer: Do you think there are differences in approach or behaviour between boys and girls in school?

Ann: When I first came I wouldn't have minded doing woodwork

Jane: You're not the only one!

Ann: But the woodwork teacher said I could do it if I really wanted to but he thought there were too many people in the room and we wouldn't have the muscle to work the machines

Other girls: Yes, yes (laughter)

-continued-

Ann: Yes, but I don't know if that was valid or if it was an excuse really

Interviewer: Did the rest of you feel the same? Did you want to do woodwork as well?

Jane: Yes, because I'm very keen on art and things like that, so I'd enjoy doing it

Interviewer: Why didn't you?

Jane: Same thing as Ann really. They said there wasn't room and we weren't strong enough and all these excuses and that

Interviewer: What else was said?

Carol: Well the general attitude was that they just didn't want girls in the class

Jane: But now they've changed it haven't they?

Carol: Yes... the third years have started doing woodwork. Its Mr ..... (headteacher) who has done that. They do a term each one, boys do needlework, so it's compulsory now for a year

Ann: I think most farmer's boys are interested only in the farm and they don't want to do anything else

Interviewer: Mmm. Does this seem obvious at school at all?

All the girls: Yes

Jane: Yes, they've got jobs already, they join really with their fathers and then they make trouble for the rest of us. You know, they're silly and that

Carol: They disrupt everything

Interviewer: They disrupt everything?

Carol: Yes

Interviewer: How do they disrupt?

Ann: Well, if you're doing private lessons up there (i.e. the private study room) they'll just come in and start strangling you and throwing the books round the place and stupid things like that.

Interviewer: Really?

Ann: Yes, there's no point in it. Just because they've got nothing to do they disturb

Jane: Yes, the lessons.... now there are higher and lower classes so most of these are in the lower ones now, so we've got out of that anyway

Carol: There's first, second and third years here you know, and we're all together, and you know it was almost impossible to do anything

-continued-

Interviewer: How did you cope with that? What did you do if you wanted to get on with your work?

Ann: Well you had to just sort of go in a corner by yourself or do it at home when you can. You just sort of get the teacher's attention.... the teacher has to teach you in a private group

Interviewer: Did you do that, did you get hold of a teacher sometimes and say.....

Ann: Yes, sometimes

Interviewer: How did you arrange that?

Ann: Well just ask him for problems and just say 'Sir I don't understand what you was on about and.... just he'll explain it to you on your own, just to a couple of you. Like most of the time the teachers are telling the other boys off for messing around so you lose out all the time

Attitudes towards Secondary School

The feature which was most apparent in boys' and girls' attitudes towards school was that the girls consistently stressed the importance to them of the social life which school provided, whereas none of the boys mentioned this aspect. In all of the interviews with the girls the following kind of statements were made:

Interviewer: What do you think about school?

Mary: I like coming to school because I meet people

Interviewer: When you say you meet people is that because you don't have much opportunity to meet them at home?

Mary: Yes, where I live there is no community centres or nothing like that and no youth clubs to go to and there's no more children around of my age. I've only got my two sisters

Judith: I like coming to school to meet a lot of people you wouldn't normally see

Interviewer: Don't you usually meet them round about in the area?

Judith: Well not really because there's not all that many children my age in the village and these two (indicating the other girls) live a long way out (rueful laugh)

Cathy: I like meeting my friends here. See them here, I don't usually see them around

-continued-

An interview with boys from varying backgrounds indicated a common indifference to school. The first two boys are farmer's sons. The rest are the sons of a laboratory technician, a builder and a lorry driver.

Interviewer:	What do you think about school?
Tom:	I don't like it. I just aren't interested in school. I'd rather be at home working on the farm
Interviewer:	Do you come from a farming background?
Tom:	Yes
Interviewer:	And is that what you're looking forward to doing?
Tom:	Yes
Interviewer:	and Steven?
Steven:	I don't like school at all
Interviewer:	Why not
Steven:	I'd rather be at home
Interviewer:	Have you always felt that or was it...
Steven:	Yes. I even used to think it at primary school
Interviewer:	Is there anything you particularly like at all. Any subject?
Steven:	No, not really
Interviewer:	Barry?
Barry:	I don't mind school, it's not too bad
Interviewer:	What sort of things do you like doing?
Barry:	Practical. Metalwork and woodwork
Bob:	I don't mind school, but I won't be sorry when I leave
Interviewer:	You won't
Anthony:	It ain't so bad once you get used to it. You can do without school really. I reckon you learn more outside than you do inside
Interviewer:	Some of you are nodding, do you agree that you do more outside than inside ?
Barry:	Yes, practical things. But you got to have schools to do reading and that

Work Expectations

The most striking feature about fifth year secondary pupils' work expectations is the difference in orientation between the boys and the girls as to whether they want to stay in the area or leave it. The majority of boys stressed that they were very keen to remain in or near Headleigh whereas the girls were both

-continued-

prepared and willing to move away. This difference must, undoubtedly be related to the local employment situation which would appear to favour males (see Table 4).

Most of the boys had secured future employment through family or neighbourhood contacts. All of the boys said too how they had been employed locally in holidays and at weekends, in farming, building or mechanics. For girls, casual employment is extremely scarce, and any money earned by being a shop assistant in the market town is significantly eroded by the bus fare.

The following interview gives an idea of the situation for boys.

Interviewer:	What work will you do when you leave school?
Alun:	I'm going on a neighbour's farm
Interviewer:	How was that fixed up?
Alun:	Well I'm working there part-time like, at weekends and in my spare time. Well I wanted to be a farmer so he said he'd take me on when I left school
Interviewer:	So you've known for a long time that's what you're going to do. And Bill?
Bill:	Well I've lived on the farm and I do the jobs and I like doing them
Interviewer:	So it's always been intended that you would carry on the farm then?
Bill:	Yes, I've always intended to

The girls, however, would seem to be branching out more independently, and although some of the jobs chosen were traditionally female ones such as nursing, there were unusual choices such as a heavy goods vehicle driver, a photographer, and voluntary service overseas.

Whereas boys seemed content to follow in their father's footsteps, girls seemed reluctant to follow in their mother's. As one of the girls put it 'she (mother) never had the opportunity to do anything'.

It is argueable that the older boys are, even in their life at school, more 'rural oriented' than the girls. The 'incomer' boy is expected to fit in with the country boys, to prove his worth. As the comment from a village youth leader and teacher shows:

> 'New boys have to go through an initiation ceremony. The girls seem to be accepted.'

He went on to give an example of this - the son of the new publican who arrived at school with a black eye having been in a fight with local lads. Then he was accepted, partly because he hadn't 'squealed'.

The outside girls, however, appear to be not only accepted by rural girls, but to be welcomed. In the teacher's opinion,

-continued-

'girls from outside exerted a strong influence on the local girls'.

Part of the outside orientation of rural girls may derive from the influence of incoming girls who they befriend. Other influences will be the fact that the girls, unlike the boys, often felt bored when not at school. They would frequently complain of there being insufficient for them to do to entertain themselves. The boys on the other hand would list all kinds of activity in which they were involved including farm related work, motor cross scrambling, hunting and shooting. For them the countryside held countless forms of pleasure, for the girls it seemed to represent a restriction. As one of the girls said 'It's alright for the tourists who come up our way and admire the view, they should try living here'.

viii) Patriarchy There is a feeling in the rural community that matters related to school are the domain of the mother. As one of the secondary school teachers stated:

> 'It's the mothers who take an interest in the school; it's they who write the letters and attend parents' evenings. The school is still considered the woman's area'.

In the opinion of the primary school head teacher: 'On the whole it's the mother who takes the greatest interest. It's not high on the list of priorities for dads, especially if they are farming dads, because they're looking forward to his being sixteen'.

As stated earlier, the 'farming calender' means that boys absent themselves from school; however, it appears that their mothers would prefer them to go to school. As one boy stated graphically 'she'd take the poker to me if I didn't go'.

Although the school is considered the mother's domain in everyday terms, a look at the Management Committee of the Primary School and the Board of Governors and the Parent Teacher Association of the Secondary School, shows the following: Among the nine managers there are only three women (one of whom is the vicar's wife) and the chairman is male. Among the twelve governors, three are female (and they are the teacher representative who is also the deputy head teacher, the parental representative, and a co-opted governor), and the chairman is male. In the Parent Teacher Association all three offices of chairman, secretary and treasurer are held by men.

Is the fact that the important decision making bodies of the Schools are male dominated a reflection of patriarchy in the area, or does it in some way highlight the contradictory nature of schooling. As we have seen, the school is the woman's domain yet it is male dominated. There would appear to be a similar contradiction about the boys' attitudes and behaviour towards girls' schooling. As we have indicated, farming boys discourage the girls from getting on with their schoolwork. However, in discussion with these same boys about the kind of education they'd

-continued-

prefer their wives to have, the following kind of remarks would be made:

Interviewer:	if and when you get married, would you like your wife to have the same kind of education as you?
Alan:	No (laughter)
Interviewer:	what would you like?
Alan:	A bit brainier, then they could do the paperwork.

CONCLUSION

The conventional wisdom that rural girls want only to remain in the village, content with the traditionally ascribed roles of wife and mother, would appear to have been challenged by our research.

Whereas the boys prefer to stay in the area of their origin, many girls are both prepared and willing to migrate. Whereas the boys in general regard schooling as rather irrelevant to their lives, girls see it as 'the way out', and are encouraged to think thus by their mothers. In this regard they may resemble rural youth in the Third World who see schooling as the chance to enter and embrace the life and values of the metropolitan areas.

On the superficial level, it might seem that boys would be unable to cope with an apparent conflict situation, Horner (1968) in which the girls are 'better' than the boys, as this would appear to represent some kind of revolt on the part of the girls to patriarchal notions of 'their place'. The boys however rationalize the girls' higher levels of motivation and performance at school in two ways. Firstly, by regarding school work as unmasculine and secondly by recognizing that in order to find employment, the girls are forced into greater school achievement levels.

The situation we have encountered renders problematic the schooling of both boys and girls. Such factors as increased mechanization of farming and drastic reduction in the availability of housing for young people must result in boys being forced into leaving the area of their choice. Girls will be forced to cope with the deflation of their aspirations because of the scarcity of satisfying work.

-continued-

We will conclude with the words of a woman who runs a rural youth club and who is the mother of a rural teenage girl:

> 'The term 'career' is misleading. It should be called a'job'. And there's nothing glamorous about most jobs. My daughter is doing a secretarial course at the technical college; she thinks secretarial work will be fulfilling. That's the trouble, they're told by careers advisors that they must fulfill themselves. There's nothing glamorous about going down in the rain to catch the early morning bus'.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

ANDERSON, D.C. (1980) 'Have the supersaver sociologists asked for it?' in The Times Higher Education Supplement 14.3.1980.

ARCHER, J. (1978) "Biological explanations of sex-role stereotypes" in CHETWYND, J and HARNETT, O, The Sex Role System Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. (p 4-17)

ASTON UNIVERSITY Dept. of Educational Enquiry & J.U.R.U.E. (1979) The Social Effects of Rural Primary School Re-organization First Interim Report, Aston Uni. Birmingham.

ASTON UNIVERSITY Dept. of Educational Enquiry and J.U.R.U.E. (1980) The Social Effects of Rural Primary School Re-organization Second Interim Report, Aston Uni. Birmingham.

BYRNE, E. (1975) cited in BYRNE, E, 1978, p 137.

BYRNE, E. (1978) Women and Education, London, Tavistock.

CHAMBERLAIN, M. (1975) Fenwomen, a Portrait of Women in an English Village. Virago.

CHETWYND, J, & HARNETT, O. (eds) (1978) The Sex Role System, Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd.

COMBER, L.C. and MEYENN, R.J. (1980) 'Education and Local Development in Rural Areas: County Paper for England and Wales'. D.E.S. London.

CORRIGAN, P. (1979) Schooling the Smash Street Kids. MacMillan, London.

DAVIS, L & MEIGHAN, R, (1975) "A Review of Schooling and Sex Roles, with particular reference to the experience of girls in Secondary Schools" in MEIGHAN, R, & DOHERTY, J. (eds.) Education and Sex Roles, Educational Review 27, 3, (165-178)

D.E.S. (1979) Reports on Education: Trends in School Population, No. 96. D.E.S. London.

DUNNE, F. (1980) 'Occupational sex-stereotyping Among Rural Young Women and Men'. Mimeo. Dept. of Education, Dartmouth College, U.S.A.

HALE, S. (1971) The Idle Hill, A Prospect for young workers in a rural area. Bedford Square Press.

HARTNETT, O, BODEN, G, & FULLER, M. (1979) Sex-role Stereotyping, Londor : Tavistock.

HENNIG, M, & JARDIM, A, (1978) The Managerial Woman London : Pan Books.

HORNER, M.S. (1968) Sex differences in achievement motivation and performance in competitive and non-competitive situations. (Doctoral dissertation, University of Michigan) Ann Arbor, Michigan: University Microfilms.

LLOYD, B.B., & ARCHER, J. (eds.) (1976) Exploring Sex Differences, London : Academic Press.

LOBBAN, G.M. (1975) "Sexism in British Primary Schools" , Women Speaking, 4. 10-13.

MACKIE, L, & PATTULLO, P, (1977) Women at Work London : Tavistock.

MACCOBY, E.E. & JACKLIN, O.N. (1975) The Psychology of Sex Differences London : Oxford University Press.

MEIGHAN, R, & DOHERTY, J, (1975) "Education and Sex Roles", Educational Review, 27,3.

MURPHY, R.J.L. (1979) ' Sex differences in examination performance. Do these reflect differences in ability or sex-role stereotypes?" in Hartnett, O, Boden, G, & Fuller, M. (eds) Sex Role Stereotyping.

MURPHY, R.J.L. (1980) "Sex Differences in G.C.E. Examination Results and Entry Statistics" Paper prepared for International Conference on Sex Differentation & Schooling, Cambridge, England.

NASH, R, et.al. (1976) 'The One Teacher School'. British Journal of Educational Studies. Vol. 24. p 12-32.

NEWBY, H, (1977) 'The Deferential Worker' A Study of Farmworkers in East Anglia. Allen Lane : London.

NICHOLSON, J, (1977) What Society Does to Girls London : Virago.

SHER, Jonathon (Ed.) (1977) Education in Rural America : A Re-assessment of Conventional Wisdom. Westview Press. Coulder, Colorado.

OAKLEY, A, (1974) Housewife, Penguin.

O.E.C.D. (1978) Education in Sparsely Populated Areas. Centre for Research and Innovation in Education. O.E.C.D. Paris.

PLOWDEN REPORT (1967) Children and Their Primary Schools H.M.S.O. London.

WHYTE, W.F. (1958) Street Corner Society University of Chicago Press.